Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-3. (canceled)

4. (currently amended)   An electronic educational toy having a housing for teaching ~~the~~ letters ~~of an alphabet,~~ words, numbers or pictures, comprising:

a toy housing supporting a planar work platform on which a child can make selections by causing contact across the planar surface of the work platform and, the toy housing enclosing

a speaker,

a processor, and

at least a portion of a sensing system capable of distinguishing between two or more simultaneous child-caused contacts with the work surface, wherein the sensing system comprises a grid of wires, wires of the grid being sequentially energized so that contact caused by the child generates a variation in one or more of the wires of the grid from which the location of contact on the work platform can be determined;

a first learning mode wherein the child explores letters, words, numbers or pictures by causing contact with the work platform without there being an incorrect selection, or indication of an incorrect selection, of a letter, word, number or picture and the toy provides audio feedback to the child when such contact corresponds to the selection of a letter, word, number or picture, the audio feedback relating to the selected letter, word, number or picture;

a second learning mode including:

a plurality of audio prompts output by ~~a~~ the speaker enclosed within the toy housing, a prompt including a question or instruction having at least one correct response, the question or instruction designed to encourage a child to make a cognitive selection of a letter, word, number or picture and indicate the cognitive selection of the letter, word, number or

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picture by causing contact with ~~a touch-sensitive surface, the touch-sensitive surface formed on at least a portion of a substantially planar surface of the toy housing~~ the work platform;

~~one or more sensors capable of sensing the location of where the touch-sensitive surface has been contacted;~~

~~a contact capable of occurring and being sensed in arbitrary child-defined locations on the touch-sensitive surface,~~ the occurrence of contact on the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ work platform in response to the question or instruction indicating the cognitive selection by the child of the letter, word, number or picture corresponding to the question or instruction;

~~a~~ the processor enclosed within the toy housing capable of: a) executing educational software, b) receiving information from the ~~one or more sensors~~ sensing system corresponding to the occurrence of contact by the child on the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ work platform and, c) using the information from the ~~sensors~~ sensing system to determine whether the child's cognitive selection of the letter, word, number or picture as indicated by the occurrence of contact by the child on the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ work platform corresponds to a correct response to the question or instruction;

a first audio feedback response output by the speaker enclosed within the toy housing, the first audio feedback response indicating that the letter, word, number or picture selected by the child corresponds to a correct response to the question or instruction; and

a second audio feedback response output by the speaker enclosed within the toy housing, the second audio feedback response indicating that the selection by the child is something other than a correct response to the question or instruction~~;~~.

~~the toy housing enclosing the speaker, at least a portion of the one or more sensors and the processor, the housing having a substantially planar surface, at least a portion of which comprises the touch-sensitive surface.~~

5. (currently amended)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 4, wherein in the first and second learning modes, the child causes contact with the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ work platform by placing an object on the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ work platform.

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6. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 4, wherein the processor generates questions or instructions with different levels of difficulty.

7. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 6, wherein the processor generates more difficult questions depending on the user having provided correct previous answers.

8. (currently amended)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 4, further comprising in the second learning mode a second prompt ~~for a correct response to the question or instruction~~ specifically asking the child to try to respond to the question or instruction again in the event the letter, word, number or picture selected by the child does not correspond to a correct response to the question or instruction.

9. (currently amended)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 4, further comprising a plurality of images presented on the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ work platform to the child to facilitate the interaction between the educational software and the child, wherein the ~~plurality of~~ images presented on the ~~touch-sensitive surface can be~~ work platform are changed from time to time, the processor being aware of the change of images without the child having to assist in advising the toy that the presented images have been changed .

10. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 4, wherein at least a portion of the educational software is capable of being loaded into the toy by users thereof.

11. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 10, wherein at least a portion of the educational software is capable of being loaded via a portable memory capable of being inserted by the user into a portable memory receiving device associated with the toy.

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12. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 10, wherein at least a portion of the educational software is capable of being downloaded from a remote location over a data transmission medium.

13. (currently amended)   An electronic educational toy having a housing for teaching letters, words ~~of a spoken language~~, numbers and pictures, comprising:

,   a toy housing supporting a planar work platform on which a child can make selections by causing contact across the planar surface of the work platform, the toy housing enclosing

a speaker,

a processor, and

at least a portion of a sensing system comprising a grid of wires, the sensing system sensing the location of a first contact caused by the child on the planar surface of the work platform and, while the first contact is maintained in position to be sensed by the sensing system, sensing the location of a second contact caused by the child on the planar surface of work platform;

a first learning mode wherein the child explores letters, words, numbers or pictures by causing contact with the work platform without there being an incorrect selection, or indication of an incorrect selection, of a letter, word, number or picture and the toy provides audio feedback to the child when such contact corresponds to the selection of a letter, word, number or picture, the audio feedback relating to the selected letter, word, number or picture;

a second learning mode including:

a plurality of audio prompts output by ~~a~~ the speaker enclosed within the toy housing, a prompt including a question or instruction having at least one correct response, the question or instruction designed to encourage a child to make a cognitive selection of a letter, word, number or picture and indicate the cognitive selection of the letter, word, number or picture by causing contact with ~~a touch-sensitive surface, the touch-sensitive surface formed on at least a portion of a substantially planar surface of the toy housing~~ the work platform;

~~one or more sensors capable of sensing the location of where the touch-sensitive surface has been contacted;~~

~~a contact capable of occurring and being sensed in arbitrary child-defined locations on the touch-sensitive surface,~~ the occurrence of contact on the ~~touch-sensitive~~

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~~surface~~ <u>work platform</u> in response to the question or instruction indicating the cognitive selection by the child of the <u>letter,</u> word<u>, number or picture</u> corresponding to the question or instruction;

a <u>the</u> processor enclosed within the toy housing capable of: a) executing educational software, b) receiving information from the ~~one or more sensors~~ <u>sensing system</u> corresponding to the occurrence of contact by the child on the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ <u>work platform</u> and, c) using the information from the ~~sensors~~ <u>sensing system</u> to determine whether the child's cognitive selection of the <u>letter,</u> word<u>, number or picture</u> as indicated by the occurrence of contact by the child on the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ <u>work platform</u> corresponds to a correct response to the question or instruction;

a first audio feedback response output by the speaker enclosed within the toy housing, the first audio feedback response indicating that the <u>letter,</u> word<u>, number or picture</u> selected by the child corresponds to a correct response to the question or instruction; and

a second audio feedback response output by the speaker enclosed within the toy housing, the second audio feedback response indicating that the selection by the child is something other than a correct response to the question or instruction~~;~~

~~the toy housing enclosing the speaker, at least a portion of the one or more sensors and the processor, the housing having a substantially planar surface, at least a portion of which comprises the touch-sensitive surface.~~

14. (currently amended)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 13, wherein <u>in the first and second learning modes,</u> the child causes contact with the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ <u>work platform</u> by placing an object on the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ <u>work platform</u>.

15. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 13, wherein the processor generates questions or instructions with different levels of difficulty.

16. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 15, wherein the processor generates more difficult questions depending on the user having provided correct previous answers.

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17. (currently amended)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 13, further comprising ~~in the first learning mode~~ a second prompt ~~for a correct response to the question or instruction~~ specifically asking the child to try to respond to the question or instruction again in the event the letter, word, number or picture selected by the child does not correspond to a correct response to the question or instruction.

18. (currently amended)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 13, further comprising a plurality of images presented on the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ work platform to the child to facilitate the interaction between the educational software and the child, wherein the ~~plurality of~~ images presented on the ~~touch-sensitive surface can be~~ work platform are changed from time to time, the processor being aware of the change of images without the child having to assist in advising the toy that the presented images have been changed.

19. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 13, wherein at least a portion of the educational software is capable of being loaded into the toy by users thereof.

20. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 19, wherein at least a portion of the educational software is capable of being loaded via a portable memory capable of being inserted by the user into a portable memory receiving device associated with the toy.

21. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 19, wherein at least a portion of the educational software is capable of being downloaded from a remote location over a data transmission medium.

22. (currently amended)   An electronic educational toy having a housing for teaching letters, words, numbers or pictures, comprising:

a toy housing supporting a planar work platform on which a child can make selections by causing contact across the planar surface of the work platform, the toy housing enclosing

a speaker,

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a processor, and

at least a portion of a sensing system designed to sense the lateral movement of a child-caused contact across the face of the work surface while the contact is maintained with the work platform;

a plurality of age-specific educational software wherein different software has been written for the toy for children of different educational levels and ages;

a movement tracking capability wherein in response to an audio prompt a child causes contact with the work platform to laterally move across the face of the work surface while the contact is maintained with the work platform and the processor detects the path of the contact as it moves laterally across the face of the work platform;

a learning mode including:

a plurality of audio prompts output by ~~a~~ the speaker enclosed within the toy housing, a prompt including a question or instruction having at least one correct response, the question or instruction designed to encourage a child to make a cognitive selection of a letter, word, number or picture and indicate the cognitive selection of the letter, word, number or picture by causing contact with ~~a touch-sensitive surface, the touch-sensitive surface formed on at least a portion of a substantially planar surface of the toy housing~~ the work platform;

~~one or more sensors capable of sensing the location of where the touch-sensitive surface has been contacted;~~

~~a contact capable of occurring and being sensed in arbitrary child-defined locations on the touch-sensitive surface,~~ the occurrence of contact on the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ work platform in response to the question or instruction indicating the cognitive selection by the child of the letter, word, number or picture corresponding to the question or instruction;

~~a~~ the processor enclosed within the toy housing capable of: a) executing the plurality of educational software, b) receiving information from the ~~one or more sensors~~ sensing system corresponding to the occurrence of contact by the child on the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ work platform and, c) using the information from the ~~sensors~~ sensing system to determine whether the child's cognitive selection of the letter, word, number or picture as indicated by the occurrence of contact by the child on the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ work platform corresponds to a correct response to the question or instruction;

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a first audio feedback response output by the speaker enclosed within the toy housing, the first audio feedback response indicating that the letter, word, number or picture selected by the child corresponds to a correct response to the question or instruction; and

a second audio feedback response output by the speaker enclosed within the toy housing, the second audio feedback response indicating that the selection by the child is something other than a correct response to the question or instruction;.

~~the toy housing enclosing the speaker, at least a portion of the one or more sensors and the processor, the housing having a substantially planar surface, at least a portion of which comprises the touch-sensitive surface.~~

23. (currently amended)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 22, wherein in the learning mode, the child causes contact with the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ work platform by placing an object on the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ work platform and, in the movement tracking capability, the child moves an object laterally across the planar surface of the work surface.

24. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 22, wherein the processor generates questions or instructions with different levels of difficulty.

25. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 24, wherein the processor generates more difficult questions depending on the user having provided correct previous answers.

26. (currently amended)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 22, further comprising in the learning mode a second prompt ~~for a correct response to the question or instruction~~ specifically asking the child to try to respond to the question or instruction again in the event the letter, word, number or picture selected by the child does not correspond to a correct response to the question or instruction.

27. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 22, further comprising a plurality of images presented on the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ work platform to the child to facilitate the interaction between the educational software and the child, wherein

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the ~~plurality of~~ images _presented_ on the ~~touch-sensitive surface can be~~ _work platform are_ changed _from time to time, the processor being aware of the change of images without the child having to assist in advising the toy that the presented images have been changed_.

28. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 22, wherein at least a portion of the educational software is capable of being loaded into the toy by users thereof.

29. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 28, wherein at least a portion of the educational software is capable of being loaded via a portable memory capable of being inserted by the user into a portable memory receiving device associated with the toy.

30. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 28, wherein at least a portion of the educational software is capable of being downloaded from a remote location over a data transmission medium.

31. (currently amended)   An electronic educational toy having a housing for teaching _letters, words, numbers or pictures_ ~~numerical operations~~, comprising:
      a toy housing supporting a planar work platform on which a child can make selections by causing contact across the planar surface of the work platform, the toy housing enclosing
            a speaker,
            a processor, and
            at least a portion of a sensing system, the sensing system receiving input from the child by sensing occurrences of contact caused by the child across the planar surface of the work platform;
      a plurality of age-specific educational software wherein different software has been written for the toy for children of different educational levels and ages;
      a plurality of images presented on the work platform to the user to facilitate the interaction between the user and the educational software, wherein the images presented on

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the work platform are changed from time to time, the processor being aware of the change of images without the child having to assist in advising the toy that the presented images have been changed;

a learning mode including:

a plurality of audio prompts output by ~~a~~ the speaker enclosed within the toy housing, a prompt including a question or instruction having at least one correct response, the question or instruction designed to encourage a child to make a cognitive selection of a letter, word, number or picture ~~numerical operation~~ and indicate the cognitive selection of the letter, word, number or picture ~~numerical operation~~ by causing contact with ~~a touch-sensitive surface, the touch-sensitive surface formed on at least a portion of a substantially planar surface of the toy housing~~ the work platform;

~~one or more sensors capable of sensing the location of where the touch-sensitive surface has been contacted;~~

~~a contact capable of occurring and being sensed in arbitrary child-defined locations on the touch-sensitive surface,~~ the occurrence of contact on the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ the work platform in response to the question or instruction indicating the cognitive selection by the child of the letter, word, number or picture ~~numerical operation~~ corresponding to the question or instruction;

~~a~~ the processor enclosed within the toy housing capable of: a) executing the plurality of educational software, b) receiving information from the ~~one or more sensors~~ sensing system corresponding to the occurrence of contact by the child on the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ work platform and, c) using the information from the ~~sensors~~ sensing system to determine whether the child's cognitive selection of letter, word, number or picture ~~the numerical operation~~ as indicated by the occurrence of contact by the child on the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ work platform corresponds to a correct response to the question or instruction;

a first audio feedback response output by the speaker enclosed within the toy housing, the first audio feedback response indicating that the letter, word, number or picture ~~the numerical operation~~ selected by the child corresponds to a correct response to the question or instruction; and

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a second audio feedback response output by the speaker enclosed within the toy housing, the second audio feedback response indicating that the selection by the child is something other than a correct response to the question or instruction~~,~~.

~~the toy housing enclosing the speaker, at least a portion of the one or more sensors and the processor, the housing having a substantially planar surface, at least a portion of which comprises the touch-sensitive surface.~~

32. (currently amended)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 31, wherein <u>in the learning mode,</u> the child causes contact with the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ <u>work platform</u> by placing an object on the ~~touch-sensitive surface~~ <u>work platform</u>.

33. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 31, wherein the processor generates questions or instructions with different levels of difficulty.

34. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 33, wherein the processor generates more difficult questions depending on the user having provided correct previous answers.

35. (currently amended)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 33, further comprising <u>in the directed learning capability</u> a second prompt ~~for a correct response to the question or instruction~~ <u>specifically asking the child to try to respond to the question or instruction again</u> in the event the <u>letter, word, number or picture</u> ~~numerical operation~~ selected by the child does not correspond to a correct response to the question or instruction.

36. (currently amended)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 31, further comprising ~~a plurality of images on the touch-sensitive surface to facilitate the interaction between the educational software and the child, wherein the plurality of images on the touch-sensitive surface can be changed~~ <u>an alternative learning mode wherein the child explores letters, words, numbers or pictures by causing contact with the work platform without there being an incorrect selection, or indication of an incorrect selection, of a letter, word, number or picture and the toy provides audio feedback to the child when such contact corresponds to</u>

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the selection of a letter, word, number or picture, the audio feedback relating to the selected letter, word, number or picture.

37. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 31, wherein at least a portion of the educational software is capable of being loaded into the toy by users thereof.

38. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 37, wherein at least a portion of the educational software is capable of being loaded via a portable memory capable of being inserted by the user into a portable memory receiving device associated with the toy.

39. (previously presented)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 37, wherein at least a portion of the educational software is capable of being downloaded from a remote location over a data transmission medium.

40. (New)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 4, wherein the work platform comprises a touch-sensitive electronic display screen electronically and temporarily displaying the plurality of images on the work platform.

41. (New)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 5, wherein the work platform comprises a contact-sensitive electronic display screen electronically and temporarily displaying the plurality of images on the work platform.

42. (New)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 13, wherein the work platform comprises a contact-sensitive electronic display screen electronically and temporarily displaying the plurality of images on the work platform.

43. (New)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 14, wherein the work platform comprises a contact-sensitive electronic display screen electronically and temporarily displaying the plurality of images on the work platform.

44. (New)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 22, wherein the work platform comprises a contact-sensitive electronic display screen electronically and temporarily displaying the plurality of images on the work platform.

45. (New)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 23, wherein the work platform comprises a contact-sensitive electronic display screen capable of electronically and temporarily displaying the plurality of images on the work platform.

46. (New)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 31, wherein the work platform comprises a contact-sensitive electronic display screen electronically and temporarily displaying the plurality of images on the work platform.

47. (New)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 32, wherein the work platform comprises a contact-sensitive electronic display screen electronically and temporarily displaying the plurality of images on the work platform.

48. (New)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 4, wherein the work platform comprises a touch-sensitive surface.

49. (New)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 13, wherein the work platform comprises a touch-sensitive surface.

50. (New)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 22, wherein the work platform comprises a touch-sensitive surface.

51. (New)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 31, wherein the work platform comprises a touch-sensitive surface.

52. (new)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 22, further comprising an alternative learning mode wherein the child explores letters, words, numbers or pictures by causing contact with the work platform without there being an incorrect selection, or indication of an incorrect selection, of a letter, word, number or picture and the toy provides audio feedback to the child when such contact corresponds to the selection of a letter, word, number or picture, the audio feedback relating to the selected letter, word, number or picture.

53. (new)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 23, further comprising an alternative learning mode wherein the child explores letters, words, numbers or pictures by causing contact with the work platform without there being an incorrect selection, or indication of an incorrect selection, of a letter, word, number or picture and the toy provides audio feedback to the child when such contact corresponds to the selection of a letter, word, number or picture, the audio feedback relating to the selected letter, word, number or picture.

54. (new)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 32, further comprising an alternative learning mode wherein the child explores letters, words, numbers or pictures by causing contact with the work platform without there being an incorrect selection, or indication of an incorrect selection, of a letter, word, number or picture and the toy provides audio feedback to the child when such contact corresponds to the selection of a letter, word, number or picture, the audio feedback relating to the selected letter, word, number or picture.

55. (new)   An electronic educational toy as in claim 31 further comprising a movement tracking capability wherein in response to an audio prompt a child causes contact with the work platform to laterally move across the face of the work surface while the contact is maintained with the work platform and the processor detects the path of the contact as it moves laterally across the face of the work platform.

56. (new)   An electronic educational toy as recited in claim 32 further comprising a movement tracking capability wherein in response to an audio prompt a child causes contact with the work platform to laterally move across the face of the work surface while the

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contact is maintained with the work platform and the processor detects the path of the contact as it moves laterally across the face of the work platform.